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ABSTRACT

Designed to increase literacy by improving parent school relationships in an inner city elementary school in the southeastern United States, a practicum provided workshops for 45 teachers as well as parents of approximately 900 students. These teacher workshops were designed to encourage teachers to keep an open line of communication with the parents all through the year and to encourage teachers to contact parents for positive reasons as well as negative ones. Six parent-teacher-child workshops were given to teach parents and children how to work together. Modeling techniques as well as "hands on activities" were all part of the Parent Teachers Association and Parent Outreach Program. Sign-in sheets for parents, teachers, and children were provided and data were collected after each session. Checklists, questionnaires, and surveys developed for the practicum were used. Outcomes of this practicum were very encouraging; all of the objectives were achieved. Findings suggest that teacher workshops designed to help teachers reach out to parents should be an important part of the curriculum. (Thirteen tables of data and three figures are included; 27 references and 13 appendixes, including a parent survey form, outreach material, and workshop agendas are attached.) (Author/NH)

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ED 361 676

Increasing Literacy by Improving Parent School Relationships

by

Theresa A. Weitock

Cluster XXXVIII

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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This practicum report was submitted by Theresa A.Weitock under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

March 24, 1993

Date of Final Approval of Report

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Dr. William Anderson, Advisor

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Literacy by Improving Parent-School Relationships. Weitock, Theresa 1993: Practicum II Report, Nova University, Ed.D., Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Involvement/Teachers' Workshops/Parents' Workshops/Parents' Teachers' and Students' Workshops/Open Line of Communication between Parents, Teachers, and Students/Self Esteem Parents/Self Esteem Students/Self Esteem Teachers/Behavior Modification/Improved Discipline/Improved Literacy.

This practicum aimed to increase literacy by improving parent-school relationships. It also attempted to provide workshops for the teachers as well as parents to help the teachers realize the importance of keeping an open line of communication with the parents all through the year.

Three teacher workshops were designed to encourage teachers to contact parents for positive reasons as well as negative ones. Six parent-teacher-child workshops were given to teach parents and children how to work together: Modeling techniques as well as "hands on activities" were all part of the Parent Teachers Association and Parent Outreach Program. Sign in sheets for parents, teachers and children were provided and data was collected after each session. Checklists, Questionraires and Surveys developed by this author were used. Feedback information was also collected.

Outcomes of this practicum were very encouraging; all of the objectives were achieved. The end result was that teacher workshops designed to help teachers reach out to parents should be an important part of the curriculum.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Community and the Work Setting

The work setting was an inner city elementary school designed in an open pod fashion. The main building housed 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. There was a Kindergarten and Pre-K building adjacent to the P.E. Field. Four new portables were added to the school last year. Two of them were used for the music department, while the other two were used for classrooms. There were 2 classes of children in each of the classroom portables. Only 1 music class at a time, however was conducted in the alternating portables.

There was a student population of 813 children at the beginning of this practicum, but extensive damage of schools in the surrounding area occurred in the late summer as a result of a natural disaster. This caused an increase of 5 to 10 students in each classroom, and brought the total population to approximately 900.

The population was multicultural. It contained various Hispanic groups as well as North American Blacks and Haitian-Creole Students.

The faculty and staff were equally diverse as well. The population that was affected by this practicum were not only the students, their parents, and their teachers. But, the rest of the staff (such as office personnel, administrators, cafeteria workers, etc), were affected as well.

The setting for the school was in the Southeastern part of the United States. The neighborhood was depicted by poverty and despair. The area was considered a high crime area due to the number of incidents of drug related crimes. The socio-economic status of these families ranges from the low to lower middle class income level. Many of the families were on welfare and unemployed, and now the new students and their families were counted among the homeless.

The school itself was part of a feeder pattern of schools where third graders were sent upon completion of their primary school. The school was considered an intermediate school because it only housed 4th, 5th, and 6th grades, with the exception of kindergarten and pre-k, which are part of the Head Start Program. The increase in students created an additional kindergarten class. When the students graduated from the intermediate school, they were sent to the junior high, (or middle school), and then to the senior high in the same feeder pattern. kindergarten students were sent to a Primary School in the same pattern.

The school had an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class,

and soon to come, a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) class. New legislation has mandated that all teachers have special training in Multi Ethnic Training Advocacy (META). The school was in the process of training its teachers. Training in META was completed by August 1, 1992.

In addition to these classes, the school also had four special education classes as well as two gifted ones.
There were three ESOL self contained classrooms; one in 4th; one in 5th; and one in 6th grade.

Although the school was multicultural, integration did not come easily for many. What was once a predominately Black neighborhood, now had various groups from South to Central America. Not only had integration created a higher unemployment rate for its inhabitants, but with the advent of increased unemployment came an increase of crime. Each cultural group blamed the other for their misfortune. The situation had resulted in an increase of tension between the different cultural groups and ultimately erupted in violence periodically, thus posing a real threat to the residents of the community by making it an unsafe place to live, work, attend school, and play.

Author's Work Setting and Role

The author was a 4th grade Chapter I teacher who was team teaching with another teacher. Together, they shared one of the portable

classrooms, and had crossed grouped the children for reading and math. But at the beginning of the new school year, because of the increase of students, the author was placed in a classroom contained in one of the pods in the main building. Although being in the main building had its advantages over the portable, it had its disadvantages also.

The main building was two stories and was designed in a pod fashion. There were three pods located on the first floor, and centered around the school's cafetorium. There were four pods located on the second floor. They were centered around the school's media center. Each pod contained 5 classrooms with 25 to 30 students in each class. Because of the structure of the pods themselves, the largest disadvantage was controlling the noise level from the surrounding classrooms, and minimizing the distractions within one's own room.

Other responsibilities held by the author were; Grade Chairperson for Fourth Grade Teachers, and Chairperson for the school's Social Committee.

Both committees worked toward the aim of increasing communication among the staff and helping the school run more smoothly.

The author had also received extensive training in Writing Across the Curriculum as well as the Usage of the Whole Language Approach in the classroom. She had given several workshops to teachers and staff as well as parents and was available for consultation and collaboration. She maintained an open line of communication between herself and all

members of the staff, including the administration.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The situation at the work setting that needed improvement was the relationship of parents, teachers and other staff members.

Parents did not show up for scheduled conferences and other meetings involving their children. The few conferences they were able to attend revealed that they were uninformed as to how to help their children at home or in school. This made them appear to be disinterested in their child's school and their child's work. In many cases, parents were intimidated by the school setting and appeared to be uncomfortable when attending meetings.

Students' scores in reading and math were low when compared to other schools in the county. Literacy was at an all time low, as well as the students' self esteem. The Students showed evidence of having no supervision after school and little help with homework. They were unmotivated and performed poorly academically. Their behavior reflected poor attitudes at home and at school. Teachers and parents found students difficult to deal with.

Teachers were too bogged down with paper work to initiate positive and welcoming phone calls to parents. All their energies were used to try to increase the students' reading and math scores and improve their behavior in the classroom and throughout the school. Teachers confessed that they only had time to contact the parents of their students, when the child was a severe behavior problem in the classroom or school. Very often, it was too late. Tension and frustration between parents and teachers mounted.

In conclusion, it was apparent that both parents and teachers needed help in communicating their ideas to one another, and working together as a team. Relationships needed to improve if the children were to succeed behaviorally and academically. It was evident that a different approach was needed to solve the problem. So, with this in mind, it was the author's intention to increase literacy by improving parent and school relationships.

Problem Documentation

Data to support the existing problem was gathered from sign in sheets, logs of attendance at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, surveys, and the comparison of Standford Achievement Test (SAT) Percentile Scores.

Attendance was extremely low at PTA Meetings, as referenced in Table 1. The logs released by the PTA for the school year showed a total of 60 people present at the end of the year's meeting (5-23-90), and a total of 23 present at the end of the following school year's meeting (5-22-91).

According to this Table, the decrease in attendance was considerably lower for the following year.

Table 1 reflects the results of past and present attendances taken from sign in sheets released by the PTA (Appendix A).

Table 1

Results Taken From Parent Outreach Program (POP) Sign In Sheets Showing the Number of Parents Attending PTA Meetings in the Past

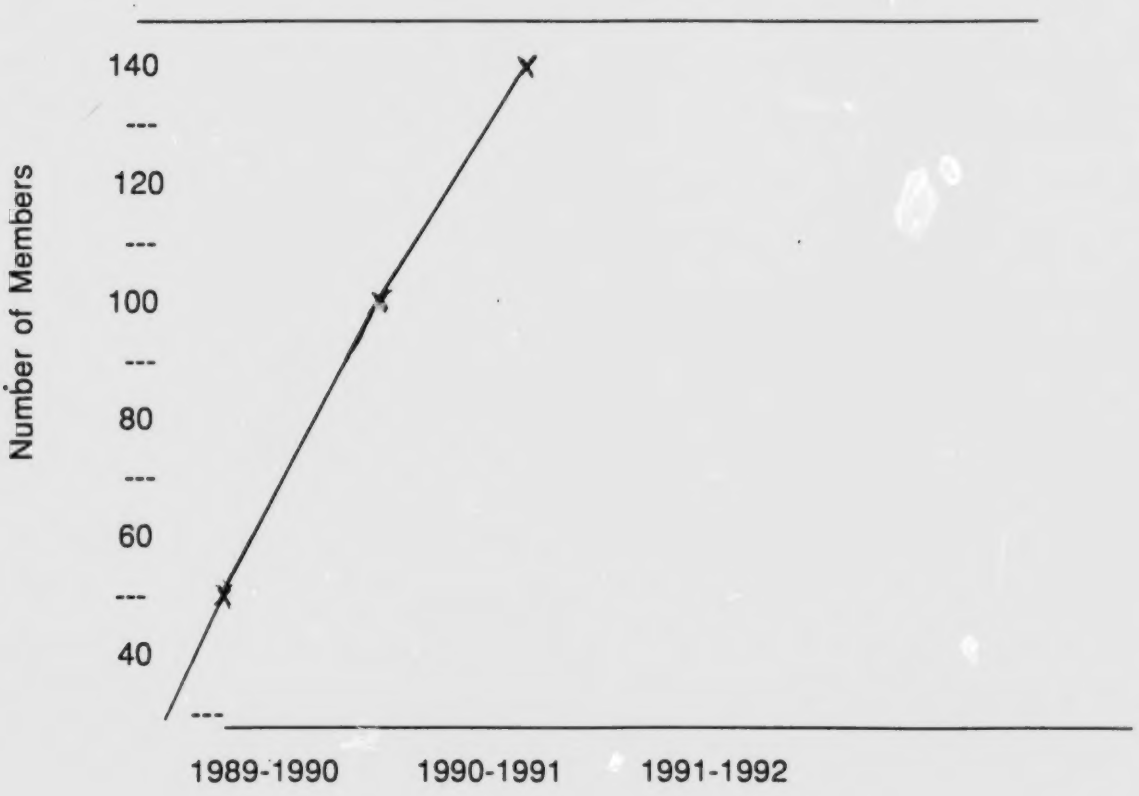
Date	Parents	Teachers	Students	Administrators
5-23-90	19	12	38	1
5-22-91	6	4	12	1

The results indicated that nineteen parents were present for the first year, and only six were present for the year following.

A further examination of the logs clearly revealed the number of people who participated in PTA membership during the last three years.

According to figure 1, PTA membership increased steadily for the 3 year period extending from the 1989-1990, to the 1990-1991 school year, and continued through the 1991-1992 school year.

Figure 1. PTA Membership.



It was noted by this author, that membership included parents, teachers, and administrators that have paid their dues. Annual dues for the 1989-90 school year was $2.00. Annual dues for the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years were $3.00. Although membership had increased for the past three years, these numbers were a poor representation of the 813 students enrolled in school.

Continued investigation of the sign in sheets revealed the number of people attending various workshops throughout the school year. Attendance at these meetings varied from 1 parent to 178.

Table 2 gave an account of workshops, meetings, and number of people present during them (Appendix B).

Table 2

Results Taken From Sign In Sheets Showing the Number of People Attending Workshops and Various Meetings Held last Year (1991-1992).

Date	Type of Meeting	# of People Present
Oct 19	Science Workshop (POP)	31
Oct 29	Pumpkin Carving (POP)	178
Nov 12	PTA General Meeting	10
Nov 27	"How To Get the Most Out of Your Child"	11
Dec 11	Christmas Ornament Workshop	68
Jan 01	Black History Month	2
Jan 30	PTA Planning Meeting	9
Feb 06	PTA Support Group	3
Feb 13	Candy Gram Makers (Parent Volunteers)	3
Feb 14	Valentine's Day (Parent Volunteers)	1
March 3	Clay Mask Workshop	33
March 24	Clay Mask Workshop	33

It was noted that a larger number of parents, students, and teachers attended activity workshops more than any other type of meeting.

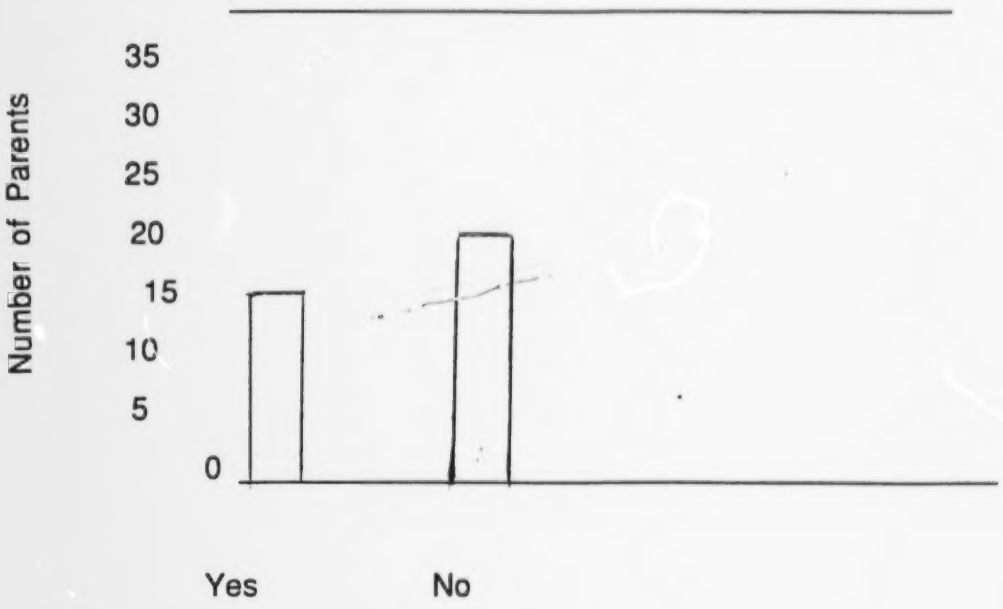
Table 2 indicated that, The Pumpkin Carving Workshop, Christmas Ornament Workshop, and Clay Mask Workshops drew the largest crowds. General PTA Meetings and Planning Meetings had the least amount attending.

Home Visits, Phone Contacts, and Planning Sessions from Sept-Feb (Appendix C), were also logged by POP Personnel, and retrieved by this author.

Home visits were often unsuccessful and difficult to achieve. Parents and families were very transient, and moved out long before home visits were completed. For the same reason phone contacts were difficult to make. Many of the students did not have phones, and a large number of those who did have phones were disconnected. Communicating with parents was a difficult task, and very much needed in the process of improving parent school relationships. Assessing the needs of parents and children were almost impossible when proper communication was not present. Not being able to reach the parents was half the problem. Figure 2. showed the results of surveys and visits trying to get the parents to become involved with their child's school. An informal interest survey to assess the needs of the parents was sent to each parent (Appendix D).

Interests range from telephoning, typing, chaperoning, writing, or planning periodic newsletters, bulletin boards hosting/hostessing, helping in the classroom, PTA activities, projects, translating, and other school related functions.

Figure 2. Parents Available As Helpers



There were only 35 responses returned to the POP Office in answer to the Needs Survey. Out of the 35 responses, 15 replied yes they would be able to help, and 20 responded no they would not be able to help. This

low response was indicative of most responses given by parents to the school.

Table 3 reflected the total number of school volunteers and classroom helpers for the whole year.

Table 3

Compares the Number of Classroom Helpers and Volunteers in the Past to the Number of Volunteers Now.

School Year	School Volunteers	Classroom Helpers
1990-1991	1	1
1991-1992	4	4

There were approximately 45 classrooms that needed help. Although the number of school volunteers and classroom helpers had increased, these figures are not considered high enough to assist all the classroom teachers.

SAT Percentile Scores from the past two years (AppendixE), were represented. Standardized percentiles have gone down considerably when compared to previous years, and students' scores are below the standardized norm.

Table 4 showed a comparison of SAT Percentile Scores for the past two years. A quick glance revealed a higher score for math than for reading.

Table 4

Comparison of SAT Median Percentile Scores for the Past Two Years

Year	Grade	Reading Comprehension	Math Comprehension
1990	4	23	50
1991	4	15	41
1990	5	23	47
1991	5	18	48
1990	6	17	57
1991	6	14	41

* Median percentile scores well below the 50th percentile may indicate a need for greater improvement in reading.

In the author's view, the causes of the problem were very complex in nature, that is to say, there were many variables to contend with in order to properly address the problem.

Causative Analysis

Possible causes of poor relationships were working parents. This presented "latch key children", or children who came home to an empty house. There was a lack of parental support which resulted in a lack of motivation on the part of the students, and a lack of self esteem for all.

A second cause of poor relationships were parents who were home with other children and were uneducated and uninformed as to ways and methods to help their children succeed in school. Single parents, and troubled parents who were involved with drugs and crime themselves, were not available or capable for adequate supervision of homework and other activities involving their children.

A third cause of poor relationships were that the students came from a low socio-economic background. This caused them to be limited in experiences necessary to succeed in the academic environment. Their scores fell far below the national norm in reading and math. This led to

behavior problems as well as academic problems.

A fourth and probable cause was that teachers and school staff were not reaching out enough to make the parents feel welcome and at home. Teachers unintentionally intimidated parents with their knowledge and formal education. Parent contacts made by teachers were usually negative by nature.

Table 5 showed a number of parent contacts made by teachers during a one month period last year. Teachers were asked to record the number of positive and negative reasons for contacting the parents.

Table 5

Results of Parent Contacts Made by 30 Classroom Teachers During the a One Month Period Showing Positive and Negative Reasons For Contacts*

Teacher #	"Positive Reasons"	"Negative" Reasons
30	87*	215*

*Represented written progress reports as well as telephone contacts, based on the report of 30 teachers.

Teachers confessed that they only called the parents when the child was having difficulty in school, or when he posed a threat to himself or others in the class. Other contacts with parents for positive reasons were not as frequent as was clearly indicated in Table 5.

Table 6 counted the number of times parents were invited as guest speakers or experts in their own cultural background during Black History Month, Spanish Heritage Day, Career Day, and other Multicultural functions.

Table 6

Results of a Recent Survey Showed the Number of Times Parents Were Invited as Guest Speakers During the School Year.

Teacher #	Guest Speaker #	Specific Workshop
30	5*	2-Clay Mask
		2-Pumpkin Carving
		1-Christmas Ornament

*Parents acted more as authorities for special activities workshops, than guest speakers or experts in their culture or specific occupation. This survey was based on the self reports of 30 teachers.

Relationship of the Problem to Literature

The home environment is the most powerful factor in determining the level of school achievement of the students, student interest in school learning and the number of years of schooling the children will receive (Bloom, 1991. Involving today's parents can be done by successful schools across the nation (Epstein, 1987).

It is obvious that what used to work will no longer work. If parents are to be involved today it must be in new ways, ways that meet their specific needs and those of their children. It calls for radical changes on the part of the classroom teachers, principals, and administrators--changes that recognize these needs and are directed at meeting them (Epstein, 1987).

Parents need help. It is out there. All they need to do is just look for it. Parents need to become involved with their child's school if they want to improve the child's performance (National School Public Relations

Association, 1991). Parents are a child's first teacher and more and more attention is being given to help them do the best job possible.

"Lending a Helping Hand", is a mentoring program given a boost by President Bush and Governor Lawton Chiles of Florida. They have asked corporate America to fill the gap that teachers and advisors cannot fill in the lives of the "latch key" children.

In a world of ever-expanding class size, "latch key" children, and unstable homes, mentors fill the gap between parents and teachers (MacEnulty, 1991). Mentoring programs have been having a positive effect in many places.

As families and institutions change, the road to adulthood is strewn with more obstacles than ever. Where polio and other infectious diseases once ravaged the young, psychological disorders are now labeled, "the new morbidity of childhood" (O'Neil, 1991, p 5).

The biggest influences of the home and surrounding community are changing dramatically in ways that leave the children with less support than before. With fewer adults to guide them, many children are left to draw upon peers, the mass media, or other sources for the norms and values that shape their decisions (O'Neil, 1991). These decisions and choices can have a lasting impact. Doing well or poorly in school is one of the many factors influenced by their choices.

Schools are being asked to move beyond their traditional boundaries.

Free breakfast and lunch programs are being developed all the time covering a wide range of services for our inner city children who are considered "at risk".

By bringing the school into the community and vice-versa, we may be able to offer young people a positive alternative to membership in gangs to provide the security they lack at home (Burke, 1991).

Schools that offer comprehensive early intervention programs for antisocial youths and their families may save them from spending their lives in costly human warehouses. The most promising intervention procedures are those that are simultaneously applied to the student's school behavior (Walker & Sylvester, 1991).

To meet the complex needs of today's students, schools and community agencies need a thoughtful approach for pooling their efforts as a awareness of the pitfalls to avoid (Guthrie & Guthrie, 1991).

The challenge is not simply to divide responsibilities but to reconceptualize the role of the school and pooling their efforts as an awarness of the pitfalls to avoid (Guthrie & Guthrie, 1991).

The challenge is not simply to divide responsibilities but reconceptualize the role of the school and relationships among the school, the community, and the larger society.

Working together, school and community can become the extended family of homeless students, fulfilling many of the needs their own

families are unable to meet.

Personal attention from a concerned adult enhances the child's experiential background and self-esteem and , in turn, facilitates the teaching-learning process (Gonzalez, 1191).

To break the cycle of illiteracy of how "the poor get poorer", schools must help parents understand how to help their children at home (Rosow, 1991).

When parents and children read together at home, they share memorable experiences, the effects of which carry over into school.

Parents can teach many skills to their children. When children of the literate elite need help, their parents can fill in the blanks the school has missed. When children of the print poor need help, they have nowhere to turn.

When literacy becomes a family affair , the challenges for all concerned may be formidable but the rewards are immeasurable.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

Based on the practicum problem, the author established several general goals to create a greater impact on the relationships of the parents, teachers, students and school.

The goals were to improve the parent-school relationships; increase parent attendance at conferences, meetings, and other programs involving their children; improve the quality of workshops showing parents how they can help their children at home and in school; raise the self esteem of parents, students, and teachers; increase the number of "positive" parent contacts; and finally encourage parents to share their expertise at school with other parents and children.

Behavioral Objectives and Measurement of Objectives

The author's specific behavioral objectives and measurement of them were;

1) By the end of the implementation period, a review of the sign-in sheets will reveal that 30% of 813 children enrolled would be represented at the PTA meetings and other school functions, by one parent or another, 10% by two or more parents, guardians or grandparents. This percentage will be an increase over the current levels of participation.

2) By the end of the implementation period, the list of classroom helpers will be increased by at least 20%. This increase will include the 45 classrooms and show evidence of 9 volunteer classroom helpers. Sign in sheets will be used (Appendix F).

3) By the end of the implementation period, 30% of all parents (representing 813 children), will sign homework indicating their supervision at home and their support for the classroom teacher.

4) By the end of the implementation period, all classroom teachers (45) will show evidence of at least

50% of homework done on a daily basis, by keeping a log for each individual child.

5) By the end of the implementation period, results from the SAT percentile scores will show an increase of at least 5 percentile points per class. This increase will be representative of the median percentile per each of the 45 classes (Appendix E).

6) By the end of the implementation period, the number of "positive" parent contacts will be increased by 10 % over the current level of contacts. This will be indicated by a log kept by each teacher noting the number of "positive" contacts made to parents as well as the "negative" ones.

7) By the end of the implementation period, participation as guest speakers will increase by 10% over the current rate of participation.

Evaluation Instruments

The author designed the following evaluation instruments to assess the goals and objectives of the practicum:

1) The Log or Sign In Sheet:- This was the official sign in sheet developed by the Chapter I Program to be used in schools by Parent Outreach Program (POP) personnel to record attendance at PTA Meetings, Workshops, and other school functions involving Chapter I parents (see Appendix A).

2) Classroom Helper/Volunteer Sign In Sheet:- This sheet was taken from a "Parents on Your Side" Resource Materials Workbook. It was designed to be used after the in service workshops given to the teachers to help them reach out to parents from the beginning of the school year, and all through the year. Its purpose was to encourage parents to take an active part in their child's education.

3) Homework Sign Sheet:- This sheet was developed by Lee Canter Associates and taken from the "Parents on Your Side" Resource Materials Workbook. It was meant for teachers to use with parents and students after the in service workshops to help teachers and parents reinforce homework

codes, by allowing parents to check their child's homework each night, and return the signed sheet at the end of the week.

4) Teachers Log for Homework: - These individual logs were for teachers to keep track of those students who did or did not do their homework. A message was sent home to the parents and a copy of the message was logged by the teacher. This homework hot line was also taken from the "Parents on Your Side" Resource Book.

5) The SAT Percentile Scores:-These were published by the county each spring with the percentiles of each student's achievement in reading and math (see Appendix E).

6) Positive Parent Contact Sheets:-They werespecifically designed for teachers, to help them monitor their phone calls to the parents. They were materials from the "Parents on Your Side" workshop.

7) Guest Speaker Comparison Chart:-This Chart was developed by the author of this practicum to compare the number of guest speakers from last year with this year's (Appendix G).

The first objective was measured by reviewing the sign in sheets provided by the POP Personnel (Appendix A). Names of parents, guardians,

teachers and students attending PTA meetings, workshops, and other school functions were recorded on these sheets, tallied, and compared with POP sign in sheets from last year.

The second objective was measured by tallying the Classroom Helper/Volunteer Sign in Sheet. Logs were kept by the individual classroom teacher, and a yearly total of helpers were recorded, and compared to the numbers of helpers from the previous year. Volunteers and helpers for field trips and home activities were included in the names on this list.

The third objective was measured by examining the Intermediate Homework Sign In Sheets. These were weekly logs recorded by the parents, and sent back the following week to their child's teacher. Their signature or initials appeared next to each day's assignment, indicating that they had supervised their child's homework. A new sheet was distributed each week for parents to monitor, and the results were tallied and recorded on tables.

The fourth objective was measured by Homework Hot lines or Logs kept by individual teacher, to keep track of the students completing homework assignments. These logs, in addition to the Homework Sign In Sheets, were tallied at the end of the year, and analyzed on a comparison table with the number of students completing homework assignments from last year.

The fifth objective was measured by comparing the Standford Achievement Test (SAT) Percentile Scores from last year with this year's (Appendix E), and an additional comparison of this year's SAT Percentile Scores with those of the County's. A further review of the SAT Cluster Analysis for this year was used to develop a Student Improvement Plan for all grades, in reading, math, and language.

The sixth objective was measured by the Positive Phone Call Form. This log was kept by each teacher after their goals for the week for positive phone calls were established. Positive behavior was then recorded along with comments from the teacher and parents during the communication. The numbers of positive phone calls and other methods of positive communication were tallied and compared with the numbers from last year.

The seventh objective was measured by reviewing the Classroom Logs of Guest Speakers for this year and comparing them to last year's. The results were placed on a comparison table (Appendix G) showing the results.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The situation at the work setting that needed improvement was the relationship of parents, teachers and other staff members.

The simplistic principle was that children model and value what they experience in their homes. All children came from culturally rich environments. But even well educated parents may not know how to foster their child's emergency competencies. When parents are low skilled, they provide a limited model indeed for literacy and limited assistance with school work at home (Nuckolls, 1991).

A parent-resource teacher working in a public elementary school's Child Parent Center for preschool children in Chicago, Illinois, implemented a series of reading workshops for parents, preschool children, teachers, and aides. These workshops were designed to increase parent participation; and information on building reading readiness skills. Program evaluation data indicated that, as the readiness workshops continued, parents, many of who were adolescents, began to see their children growing more interested in books, being more expressive and getting better reports from their teachers. Other parents heard about benefits of the workshops.

However, attendance charts revealed a fluctuation of attendance, with the first and sixth month of the 10 month intervention having the greatest

attendance. Pretest-posttest comparisons indicate that children's reading readiness scores improved. Concluding remarks offered recommendations for improving the intervention program (Weil, 1986).

This research review identified parental roles and practices that have been shown to promote reading readiness, receptivity to reading instruction, and increased achievement in reading. Reviews of studies of intervention programs designed to expand or alter parental practices in improving children's reading attitudes and achievement (Silvern, 1985).

To study the effects over time of teacher practices concerning parent involvement on student achievement test scores, longitudinal data from 239 students (in Baltimore, Maryland, Grades 3 and 5) who took the California Achievement Test in the fall and spring of the 1980-81 school year, were analyzed. The students were in the classrooms of 14 teachers who ranged in their emphasis from confirmed leaders to infrequent uses to non-users of parent involvement in learning activities at home.

Results showed that, from the fall to the spring, students whose teachers were leaders in the use of parent involvement made greater gains in reading achievement than did other students. HoweverÂr, there were no effects on math achievement for students whose teachers involved parents and the change in achievement of their children. Apparently, important consequences can occur when teachers make parent involvement in learning activities at home regular teaching practice (Epstein, 1984).

This document distinguished between surface and meaningful parent involvement in reading. It described six situations that meaningfully involved parents in school;

1) parent learning stations
2) newspaper activities
3) a parent talent book
4) "thin book" reading from "cut up books"
5) parent activity sheets
6) a parent recreation room (Criscuolo, 1984).

This article described an inner-city parent involvement program based on research showing that when parents provide extra reading instruction at home their children's reading performance improved.

Reports on an evaluation of the program that showed significant reading achievement gains for children were enrolled in it (Shuck, et al., 1983).

The New Haven (Connecticut) Public School System has 18 programs, including community tutors, a recipe booklet to teach reading at home, a parent-teacher reading advisory board, reading courses for parents, classroom visits, and letters to parents detailing their children's reading progress (Criscuolo, 1982).

The Bryan Independent School District (Texas) had implemented a primary grade parent involvement program based on a home-partnership model and a contract of cooperation between the parents and the schools. By signing the contract, the parents agreed to;

1) listen to their child read 15 minutes three days a week.
2) read a story a day to their child.
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1) listen to their child read 15 minutes three days a week.
2) read a story a day to their child.
3) three times a week, read a book or magazine of their choice for 15 minutes while their child reads something of interest.
4) conduct the activities sent home in folders each week.

At the same time, the teachers agreed to assist each student in his or her acquisition of reading skills, sent the folders home each week, responded to parental concerns and questions and sent home supplementary books to be used during the reading periods at home. The folders contained a sight word list, independent activities, and parent directed lessons. This package was accompanied by a weekly news letter from the teacher that informed parents of the skills and activities that the students were engaged in that week.

Both teachers and parents have responded positively to the program, and, after the first year, both groups noted that the students had developed a positive attitude toward reading (Erwin, 1981).

This journal article introduced preschool children to reading through parent involvement. It was a project funded by a New York State Education Department mini-grant. The major activity of the project was to inform parents of preschool children of the research findings and theories concerning reading to young children. Three news letters were mailed each year to families identified by school census. Three evening lectures were scheduled, and invitations to speak to parents at various meetings had been accepted. It was the contention of this project that children's inherent language development and subtleties of the oral-aural at itself made reading aloud to children the essential ingredient of the beginning reading process. When theoretical questions were asked by parents, the work of psycholinguist Frank Smith was examined for answers. Smith offered two basic assumptions which children must recognize, that print had meaning, and that written language was different than speech (McKay, 1981). The effectiveness of the project was measured over a period of 5 years by end-of-year testing in first grade.

Realizing the importance of parents in the educational process, several states have launched campaigns to involve parents with their children in home reading activities. Using these programs as examples, the Wentzville R-IV School District (Missouri) devised and initiated "Spring Into Reading", a plan for encouraging parental involvement in leisure time reading activities. The program consisted of an 8-week contractual agreement between parent and child to spend 15 minutes per,

5 days a week in a reading activity.

Rewards such as pine seedlings or stickers were given throughout the program as incentives to keep the children reading. To start the program a time-line was developed that clearly listed all of the important events in the program, such as halfway points, dates that parent letters would go home, dates of incentive distributions, and so forth. Student weekly record sheets were also maintained and collected at the end of the program. Each participant who completed the program received a certificate of accomplishment signed by the superintendent, their building principal, and a classroom teacher, as well as a coupon for free French fries from a local food franchise. Although some parents objected to the rigorous time requirement, the contractual agreement, and certain awards, the overwhelming response was positive (Fels & Langston, 1982).

As part of a series of manuals prepared for reading education workshops for parents and educators, this booklet focused on reading readiness activities. Divided into three sections, the booklet described activities for parents to do with their children that develop speaking and listening vocabularies, inquisitiveness for learning, and ability to organize time and effort. The first section defined learning readiness and the importance of language development in learning to read, then described nine specific activities to use with preschool through second grade children. Ten activities appropriate for parents to use with children in grades three through six were presented in the second section. The last

section dealt with the development of areas of readiness essential to children in grades seven through twelve; motivation to succeed, background of experience, and ability to study (Indiana State Dept. of Public Instruction, 1980).

Klein (1978), reported research on the influence of parents and the home environment in developing the child's reading potential and described parent education programs designed to involve the parent in the learning development of the child.

Hoskisson (1974), reported how parents helped two youngsters overcome reading difficulties. Also presented some tentative but studied observation about parents helping their children learn to read better.

Greenfield (1977), presented a paper at the Annual Meeting of the Title I compensatory program for the disadvantaged (kindergarten through sixth grade) it was designed to involve parents in the reading process of their children, both in the home and at school. Parents were sent weekly reports on their children's progress in reading, which always included sessions, parents observe staff members using reading materials, worked with their own children under staff guidance, and made reading games and activities geared to the needs of their children. Visits were made to all homes at least once a month; the visiting staff members showed parents how to make use of the staff prepared handbooks and demonstrated activities geared to the specific needs of their children.

Langham (1975), developed a book to furnish teachers and parents

with ideas for activities and games which aided children in the transition from oral language to printed language for reading and math. These games were designed to provide children with activities and experiences that increased vocabularies and made them useful in communication, language study that related children's own speech to reading and math skills, and contact with ideas and language as used by other people. Games, made from the following common materials, were outlined; string, pizza board, golf tees, egg cartons, clothes pins, party supplies paper clips, flash and picture cubes, pointers, card pins, paper cut outs, pockets and titles. Also included were word lists, material lists, and an order form.

Woods (1974), purpose when doing this study was to assess the influence of parental participation in the school on the assistance parents could give their children outside of the classroom. A Parent Involvement Program was developed in the Mesa, Arizona Title I schools to help raise the consistently low reading readiness scores of the kindergarten classrooms in five of these schools: 40 students whose parents did not participate in the instruction twice a week in working effectively with their children, making reading games, and teaching in the kindergarten classroom one day a week. The Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis Test on Phonemes was also administered as a posttest). Results showed that all children who were taught by the parents mastered the beginning skill of letter recognition, regardless of whether their own parents attended the Parent Involvement Programs.

However, in the more difficult task of learning phonemes, the children whose own parents attended the program learned more letter sounds than children whose own parents did not attend.

Wise (1972), conducted a study to explore the possibility of developing a Parent Participation Reading Clinic home-based instructional model for assisting in the teaching of reading to economically disadvantaged elementary school children. Working within a community based child health care agency in Washington D.C., the Parent Participation Reading Clinic offered an innovative model for providing remedial educationally handicapped children through involvement of the child's parents or older sibling as a"home-instructor" in the teaching process. Thirty-eight elementary school children (19 experimental and 19 match control) participated in the study over an eight month period. As a group, the experimental children who participated in the program showed significant gains over the matched control group on eight month re-evaluation on the California Test of Basic Skills, (Wise, 1972) vocabulary and comprehension reading sub-tests. The results indicated no significant positive effects among experimental subjects for increasing IQ scores as measured on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Wise, 1972). Significant results were found for the within group assessment of the Wide Range achievement Test, (Wise, 1972) (reading) and Dolch Word List Test, (Wise, 1972). . The general findings of this study were interpreted as

supportive of further development of this alternative compensatory education model.

In a Reading Conference, Willmon (1968), addressed disadvantaged youth, and how environment and family influence them. She talked about the importance of parent participating in their reading program, and how all of these factors affected the acquisition of language.

Various domains that were touched upon in the literature review research were mathematics, reading skills, learning styles, teaching styles, motivation techniques for parents and children and increasing multicultural awareness.

Description of Selected Solutions

In selecting strategies to be implemented, the author chose some innovative and successful ideas used by others and modified them to meet the expectations of this practicum, and the needs of the parents, students, and teachers of the school. Those strategies were incorporated into two distinct components, "Parent, Teacher, Child" workshops and "Parents on Your Side" workshops.

"Parent, Teacher, Child" workshops were a series of six reading and

math workshops for parents, teachers, and children. They were designed to increase parent involvement at home as well as in school. Their main objective was to bring parents, teachers, and students together in a relaxed atmosphere as well as increase literacy for all. The workshops consisted of "hands on" activities and were designed to be interesting, unintimidating, educational, and fun.

Field trips to the library each month were organized for parents and students. On these field trips, they read together, saw films, attended puppet shows and checked out books for their pleasure and enjoyment.

The other component to this practicum was the "Parents on Your Side" workshops. These workshops were designed by the author to work with teachers in reaching out to the parents. It was the author's intention to get parents on the side of the teachers and improve the relationship of teachers and parents alike. It was also the author's desire to develop a team concept between parents, teachers, and the school, making a difference in the lives and behavior of the students.

The following strategies were selected to improve parent-school relationships. The first solution strategy was for the author to become the School Site Coordinator for the Parent Outreach Program (POP) and initiate home visits and welcoming telephone calls to the parents before the school year began. The author felt that it was important to contact parents with positive phone calls and win them over before any trouble arose with their child during the school year. Having already acquainted

herself with them on a positive basis, she felt sure that if she needed to contact them in the future with a discipline problem, they would be more receptive and cooperative to her needs and wants as their child's classroom teacher.

A second strategy featured "hands on" activities workshops that provided parents with the tools they needed to help their children at home. All supplies and materials were given or donated by the POP Program and the PTA for the parents and children to use at home as well as at school. Follow up activities, tips and suggestions were given to the parents to take home. Prizes and games added to the enjoyment of these activities. Both children and parents looked forward to coming to these workshops.

A third strategy was to schedule these activities and workshops in the evenings, on Saturdays, and at times convenient to the parents and all other participants. It was the author's intention to reach out to as many parents and teachers as possible.

A fourth strategy was to encourage parents to take on a supervisory role. Homework sheets were sent home for parents to sign and monitor and sent back with notes and comments to the teacher. the author encouraged parents and teachers to keep an open line of communication on the child's progress and all school activities with the intention of promoting a camaraderie between parents and teachers.

The solution strategies were selected to provide the parents, teachers, and students with worthwhile experiences that would lead to

better relationships between the parents, the teachers, and the school, and would ultimately make all the difference in the world in the success of their children.

REPORT of ACTION TAKEN

In addressing the problem of increasing literacy by improving parent school relationships, the author divided the project into two major components, "Getting Parents on Your Side Workshops", and "Parent, Child Workshops". There were four sequential phases to this project. The first phase was the preparation and planning, the second began the orientation phase, the third involved the implementation, and finally the last phase dealt with the evaluation of the project. the total project involved the entire student body (approximately 900 students), the teachers, faculty, and staff, administrators, and of course, the parents.

The first phase of the project, the preparatory/planning phase involved utilizing data gathered about the problem. After carefully reviewing the Parents Needs Survey (Appendix D), SAT Percentile Scores (Appendix E) and the Attitudinal Scale sent to the parents at the end of the previous year, the author presented a plan to the administrators and staff asking them for support in implementing the project. Once they confirmed their necessary support, the author devised a schedule of events and

prepared the materials needed for the next phase of the project, the orientation phase.

The primary purpose of this phase was to orient teachers and train them for their role, involvement, and support in implementing the project. three in service workshops were held to accomplish this task. All workshops involved a similar agenda.

The first workshop, "Getting Parents on Your Side" (Appendix J), involved administrators and faculty members that agreed to follow through on the plan of action developed during the workshop. Teachers were going to begin an open line of communication with the parents. Materials from the Parent's Resource Book were provided for each teacher to carry out their pledge effectively, solution strategies, and positive communication were stressed throughout the workshop. Questions and answers were encouraged.

The workshop, "How to Make POP Work for You" (Appendix K), reviewed the purpose of the workshop along with its goals and objectives. Guide lines for working with the Parent Outreach Program were defined. Role playing proved to be an effective means in demonstrating objectives for home visits and welcoming telephone calls. Questions and answers were invited.

The third workshop, "Working With Parents" (Appendix L), reviewed the purposes and goals of Teacher's Workshops I & II. Plans of action for

workshops were decided, and a calendar of events was made tentatively. All participants made the commitment to improve relationships between parents, teachers, and the school. All agreed that implementation should begin as soon as possible.

It was extremely imperative that all participants committed themselves to the success of this project. The first month found itself in the midst of planning activities to generate school spirit. Efforts to reach out parents and involve them in the frenzy of 'Spirit Week went home in the form of flyers. They accepted graciously. Each day was designated with a different activity (hat day, color day, etc.). A get acquainted breakfast for parents wishing to help during summer school was scheduled. Parents were encouraged to sign up for the coming year as well. A parent support group was formed, and headed by the school psychologist. After a brief presentation by the psychologist, we were off to a roaring start.

Plans for the second month involved scheduling "Parent, Teacher, Student Workshops". Home visits began, and teachers were making contact with parents. Parents began visiting the school to discuss their children's behavior showing communication had begun. However, just as things appeared to going well, a natural disaster occurred, causing the delay of school for two weeks.

During that time, the school was used as a shelter for those who lost their homes. Families with children, administrators, and teachers

got together and comforted each other. A bond of closeness developed as families helped one another survive. Administrators were amazed with the way in which each h cultural group conducted themselves. The police were present, but there was no need for law and order. ^The families all pulled together and tried to salvage whatever they had left.

Anxious to return to normal, students and teachers returned to regularly scheduled classes during the third month of implementation. Workshops for parents giving them tips on how to help their children were needed then more than ever. During this month, parents were trained to work with their children on instructional objectives by using simple things around the house. Recipes for reading and math were suggested as well as simple grocery lists. Games and prizes were given at each workshop for parents and children to use as follow up activities at home. An Open House Meeting for parents and children was scheduled.

Trips to the library were scheduled with parents, teachers, and children during the fourth month of implementation. It set a precedence for the rest of the year. Each month a trip was scheduled, it involved some planning and preparation by the classroom teacher. Before the first visit to the library, the author sent ahead forms already filled out by the children. These forms entitled them to a library card. They received their card upon their first visit, and kept it throughout the year. The library was quite a distance from the school, so it made a very nice walk (11 blocks one way). This method of transportation was chosen by the author because of financial reasons. The children are in a Chapter I Program at

School, and they are on a free lunch schedule. On the days of the field trip, the author had the cafeteria make bag lunches for the children and parents, and they carried them with them to the library. Once they arrived at the library, they chose the books they wanted and checked them out with their new cards. They were then ushered into a little room and showed films, heard stories, and viewed puppet shows. Afterward they began their journey back to school. On the way back, they usually stopped at the park, ate their lunches and played in the playground. Happy and tired, they returned to school. They were pleasant and relaxed for days. The author always invited the kindergarten classes to come with them. The fourth graders would be helpers, and read to the kindergarten childern. Some would take the kindertgarten students and hold their hand as they walked to and from the library (the trip involved crossing several busy streets). Parents, students, and teachers enjoyed these monthly trips. And they proved to be fund as well as educational.

Also in the fourth month was the Pumpkin carving workshops. POP provided pumpkins for carving, flour and ingredients for making pumpkin pies, and seeds for roasting. Parents, teachers, and children worked together in small groups. Prizes were given for the best decorated pumpkins. Parent volunteers brought home the pies for baking and the seeds for roasting. The next day, the pies and seeds were brought back to school perfectly baked and roasted, for all the participants of the Pumpkin workshop to enjoy. It was a memorable occasion.

The fifth month brought teachers, parents, and children together to make Thanksgiving Baskets for the needy families in the community. The baskets were made by the children and their teachers. They were decorated and filled with can goods. Prizes for the most unusual baskets were given. Afterward, each basket was delivered to a family in the neighborhood. Home visits and phone contacts continued. Communication with parents was improving.

The sixth month brought teachers and children together for a Christmas Workshop. All kinds of ornaments were made, and the parents and children were delighted to take them home with them. Door prizes and gifts added to the festivities of the occasion.

Other Parenting workshops continued with the school psychologist, and parents seemed to benefit from them. Another PTA Meeting involving the election of new officers occurred. A volunteer telephone bank was also established during this month of implementation for the purpose of utilizing parents' expertise.

The seventh month involved Career Day. Parents and other professional were used as resources. Several of them shared their expertises with the students and teachers. Plans for black History month were made and a calendar of events was drawn. Parents were also asked to speak to the teachers and children about their culture. Parents were

Beginning to feel more comfortable about coming to school and becoming involved.

The eight month, the final workshop was given. It was a Tee Shirt Painting workshop. All materials were provided by the POP and teachers. The parents brought their white Tee Shirts and Tennis shoes, and learned how to decorate them creatively. It was an enjoyable workshop for all who attended. During this month a black History Luncheon was given. Parents, teachers, and children participated in the celebration.

This workshop brought a close to the eight month practicum. The final Evaluation forms and Attitudinal Scales were administered. A letter of thanks and valentines went home to parents, teachers, and students. Parents and teachers were given tips for working with their children a these workshops.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DISSEMINATION

The problem that existed in this author's work setting was the poor relationship between the parents, the teachers and the school. Attendance at conferences, meetings, and other programs involving their children was poor. Parents were unable to help their children at home and in school. The self esteem of parents and students was increasingly low. Many of the parents were illiterate, and many of the students were low in literacy.

Teachers themselves were becoming frustrated. They didn't know how to communicate their caring to the students and their parents. Most of their contacts with parents was "negative". It was only to inform parents of discipline problems they were having with their children at school. Parents felt inadequate and ineffective in the lives of their children.

These problems existed because of a lack of communication between parents, teachers, and school personnel.

The goal of this practicum was to help teachers and staff to reach out to the parents and communicate how much they cared about their children and families. In doing so, they let the parents know that they were a vital part of their child education and their support and help was

not only desirable, but was imperative to their child success in school.

The solution to the problem was to keep an open line of communication before school even began. This was done by phone calls and written contacts with only positive invitations to come to school and be a part of a working team. This open line of communication was on going and continued throughout the year.

Workshops were also given, not only to parents to help them help their children and feel comfortable in the school setting, but also to the teachers, to help them reach out to parents in a positive way.

Results

The following results are based on the outcomes of the practicum and on the objectives discussed in Chapter III. The first objective projected that by the end of the eight months of the practicum that 30% of 900 children enrolled would be represented at the PTA meetings and other school functions, by one parent or another, 10% by two or more parents, guardians or grandparents. Attendance was measured by tallying the sign in sheets and logs presented at each meeting, and comparing the attendance for this year with last year. Table 7 shows the results of the objective.

Table 7

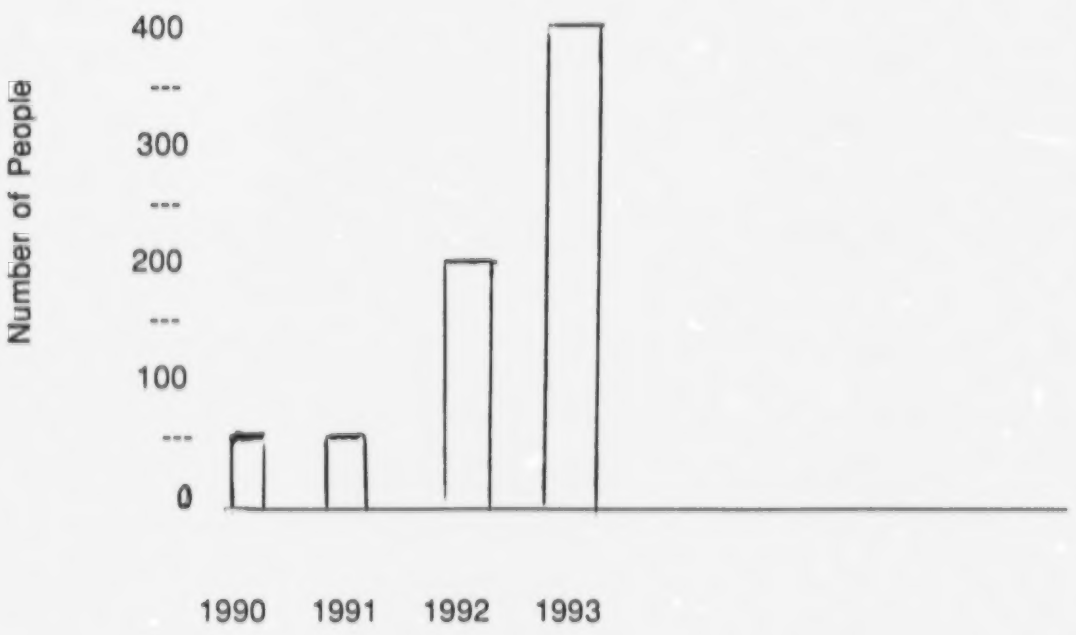
Comparison of Parents Attending PTA Meetings for the Past Two Years

	Attendance	Population	Percentage
1991/1992	200	800	25%
1992/1993	360	900	40%

February was the final month in the eight month practicum. The attendance reflects a total combination of parents and guardians present for the whole year. This objective was met with a high level of success. The percentage of attendance was 40%, which was 10% higher than the author had anticipated. The success of the increase in attendance is attributed to the specific workshops geared to the needs and interest of the parents and teachers.

Figure 3 gives a further comparison of attendance during a four year period for parents, teachers, and children. Note the increase in attendance during the last year when the practicum was implemented.

Figure 3. PTA Attendance



The second objective stated by this author was that during the eight months of the practicum, the list of classroom helpers would increase by 20%. This would include the 45 classrooms and show evidence of 9

Volunteer classroom helpers. This objective was met successfully as reflected in Table 8 . The author compared the number of parents chaperon's field trips during this eight month practicum to the number of chaperon's attending field trips last year.

Table 8

Comparison of the Number of Parents Chaperon's Field Trips During the Eight Month Practicum When Compared to Chaperon's Attending Field Trips Last Year

	# Chaperon's	# Field Trips	#Chaperon's Per Trip
1991/1992	6	6	1
1992/1993	20	4	5

The Field Trip Period was from July to February. A tally was kept on classroom field trip forms, and classroom helper logs made by the classroom teacher. In the past, it was difficult to get chaperon's to come on field trips. Reaching out to parents created a cam between parents and teachers. Getting acquainted at the beginning of the year improved relationships for all. Parents felt more comfortable coming to

School to help out with field trips and other things in the classroom. Reaching out to parents before school began paved the way for the success of this objective, and it eventually cemented relationships.

The third objective anticipated by the author for this practicum was that 30% of all parents would sign homework indicating their supervision at home and support for the classroom teacher. At least 50% of the parents have been signing the students' homework. This is a great improvement over past years. The success of this objective was attributed to the "Homework Workshops" giving the parents hints as to how to help their children with homework. These tips gave them the tools they needed to help their children succeed. The homework sign in sheets were used to measure this objective. When parents supervised their child homework, they were sure to sign it and send the sign in sheet with the student. Parents were pleased that they were able to help their children, and their children were pleased that they were receiving this attention from their parents. This activity increased the self esteem of both the parent and child. For these reasons, the author considers this objective a success. Table 9 reflects the results.

Table 9

Results Showing the Number of Parents Signing Homework During the Eight Month Practicum Period.

	# Number Signing	# Number of Parents	Percent
1992/1993	450	900	50%

These results were based on the self report of classroom teachers taken during the months from July to February.

The fourth objective attempted by the author stated that all classroom teachers would show evidence of 50% of homework done on a daily basis. This objective was achieved as predicted. The results of this objective were measured on logs kept by the classroom teachers. The logs were provided by the workshop given for all teachers to help get parents or their side. 88% of the students completed homework on a daily basis. This proved to be beneficial to all those who completed their work. Success of this objective was attributed to the incentives and rewards the teachers gave to the students for completing their work, and to the parents for thei support and diligence in keeping up those homework logs. Completing homework had positive side effects in the classroom. The children were

learning good work habits and those habits spilled over into classrooms an other areas of the curriculum. Table 10 gives the percentages.

Table 10

Comparison of Homework Done on a Daily Basis for the Last Two Years

	# Classes	# Homework Completed	Percentage
1991/1992	45	20	44%
1992/1993	45	40	88%

These numbers were based on the self report of 45 classroom teachers after carefully tallying the homework logs taken during the months of September to February. The success of this particular objective is attributed to the parents and the help they gave to the students at home. They showed that they can make a difference.

Objective five focused on improving the literacy of the students. This objective was measured by the results of the SAT percentages scores for

each class for the past two years. The author was expecting to increase SAT percentages scores for each class by 5 percentages points. Table 11 is based on the percentages scores reported by the county. These are the results.

Table 11

Comparison of the Results of SAT Percentages Scores From the Last Two Years

Grade	Reading Comprehension		Math Computation	
	'91	'92	'91	'92
.	15	18	41	55
..	18	23	48	47
.	14	18	41	36

These results revealed an increase in both reading and math in percentages points for fourth grade, and an increase in reading for fifth and sixth grade. This objective was moderately successful in reading,

because each class showed an increase in percentages points. However, this increase was not as high as the author had predicted. The author predicted an increase of at least 5 points for all classes. Increases in reading were attributed to the "Reading Workshops" given by the author and also the monthly field trips to the library. Less successful was math. Fourth Grade revealed an increase in percentages points for math, while fifth and sixth grade showed a decrease. This decrease in mathematics may be reflective of a new SAT test given to the students for the first time this year.

Objective six was measured by the number of positive contacts with parents that tallied on the "positive contact" sheets given to the teachers at the workshops. It was projected, by the author, that the number of positive parent contacts would increase by 10%. Table 12 gives an account of the results.

Table 12

Comparison of "Positive" Parent Contacts for This Year and Last.

	# Positive Contacts	# Students	Percentage
1991/1992	0	800	0
1992/1993	100	900	11

The success of this objective was considered to be the direct result of the "Getting Parents on Your Side Workshops". Teachers now know the difference between a positive contact and a negative one.

Table 12 reveals the number of positive contacts to parents to be up 11%. These positive contacts were in the forms of phone calls, notes to parents and Parent Teacher Conferences. It was interesting to note that at the beginning of this practicum, the author was told by most teachers that all of their contacts with parents were "positive" ones. They counted phone calls home informing parents of "negative behavior" as a "positive" contact if the problem was resolved at the end of the conversation, or if the parents agreed to take disciplinary actions with their children.

It was not until the workshops (3) "Getting Parents on Your Side" were given, that teachers realized that these contacts were considered "negative" ones.

Tables began to turn once teachers realized the importance of welcoming phone calls, introductory notes and follow up phone calls. Happy messages informing parents and students how important they were to the team of parents, teachers, and students were vital to the success of the student in school.

Objective seven projected that by the end of the implementation period, the number of guest speakers would
Have increased by 10% over the current rate of 5 for the 1991-1992 school year. Table 13 shows the comparison of the number of guest speakers for the past two years.

Table 13

Comparison of the Number of Guest Speakers for the Past Two Years

	# Guest Speakers For Career Day
1991/1992	5
1992/1993	10

Table 13 revealed that this objective was met very successfully since the number of guest speakers doubled from last year to this year showing an increase of 50%. The success of this objective can be attributed to the way parents feel about the school now. They feel more comfortable within the school setting and very important when classroom teachers ask them to speak about a field in which they are knowledgeable.

Discussion

The following conclusions have been drawn on the basis of research findings, personal observations, and personal involvement with students and their parents, particularly during the implementation period.

The first objective of this practicum was to increase the attendance of the parents in all areas of the curriculum. The author felt that the objective was met with a great deal of success in that the tables reflected a 40% increase in attendance which was more than the 10% originally anticipated.

The author felt strongly about the need for parents to become involved with their children's school. They were the children's first teachers and they still have the greatest influence on their lives. Getting the paarents to come to school in a welcoming and friendly atmosphere was the first step in improving relations with parents, teachers, and students.

The success of the increase in attendance was attributed to the number of workshops, activities, and positive contacts made with parents by teachers. The workshops were fun, interesting and educational. More importantly, they were geared to the needs and wants of the parents, teachers, and students. They exhibited little or no pressure on the participants.

The second objective focused on securing up volunteers for classroom helpers and chaperon's for field trips. The author was informed at the beginning of the practicum that parents do not usually participate in field trips. In addition, the author was further informed that the parents would not be interested in helping out at school and going on field trips. To the amazement of this author, field trips averaged about 5 chaperon's a trip increasing the pleasure and enjoyment of all who attendee.

The author attributed the success of this objective to the reaching out strategies learned from the in service workshops given to all teachers from the beginning of the practicum implementation. Teachers and

parents agreed that it was important for parents and teachers to be on the same side. They both had the same goals and objectives and they were to insure the success of their children in school. When parents and teachers Formed a cam, wonderful things began to happen.

Objective three was an easy objective to achieve. Parents were beginning to feel comfortable with the teachers from the workshops and positive phone contacts. When they were presented with a homework check sheet, they were eager to sign it. They knew that the teachers really cared about their children and they knew if they needed their support, the teachers would do all that they could for the parents, their children, and their families.

Objective four dealt with more students completing their homework on a daily basis. Again, the author was excited to see such an increase in the number of students completing their assignments. This came as no surprise to the author, due to time spent in planning, preparing, and executing workshops geared specifically to help the parents at home with their children. This greatly supported the author's theory that the parents were very interested in helping their children. They just needed help, direction, and encouragement prior to the practicum's implementation process.

For the most part, objective five was partly successful. However, not completely. It was the author's desire to increase each class by 5 percentages points in reading and math. This was not achieved. The

author did see an increase of 3 percentages points in reading for fourth grade, 5 percentages points in fifth grade, and 4 percentages points in sixth grade. Math results showed only an increase in percentages points for fourth grade and a decrease in percentages points for fifth and sixth grades. There were many variables to contend with when dealing with SAT percentages. Too many for the author to speculate. However, the fact that the scores showed an increase a in reading was very encouraging to the author. Another favorable outcome of this practicum was the increase in the umber of books students were reading each month. The author attributed the increase of field trips made to the library each month, with parents as chaperon's. Of all the objectives, this one was the most difficult to measure with a strong degree of accuracy in terms of the margin of error.

Objective six was extremely successful. Parents were surprised to hear positive things when they answered the phone call from their child teacher. At first, they were defensive, waiting for the bomb to be dropped. When they heard only positive news, they were pleasantly surprised. After a few of these positive phone calls, a few happy notes sent home and enjoyable workshops, parents and teachers found themselves on the same side.

Objective seven utilized parents and involved them in more of a teacher capacity. This turned into a successful endeavor. When teachers first asked parents to come to school and speak to the children, they were

somewhat intimidated. But after a bond was formed and the teachers demonstrated their Care and respect for parents and their families, it was easy to ask them to talk about their culture, their customs, their country, etc. They were proud people and they felt important when asked to share their culture with the students, teachers, and other parents in the school. Behavior and attitudes improved in parents, students, and teachers, promising additional success in years to come.

Our children are our most valuable resources, and we need to help them know their worth. Improving our relationships with their parents increases the child opportunity for success. Research has shown that those students whose parents are involved with their parents child education, behave better, and achieve more in school. It is important for parents, teachers, and students to work together. When this is done, success is imminent.

An extraordinary side effect of the practicum was an increase of self esteem on the part of the parents, teachers, and students. Another positive side effect was an increase of student achievement in classrooms, homework, and other final testing scores. The children are reading and writing more than in the past. This is evident by the number of book reports turned in by students.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this practicum, which included research, personal observations and experiences, the author has three specific recommendations. The first addresses the practicum. The school should offer a program at the beginning of the year to teachers in an effort to improve parent and school relationships. Communicating with parents is a continuous process which should start at the beginning of the year before the children even return to school. Getting parents on their side should be a major concern of teachers today. Together they can make a difference.

A second recommedation would be to give parent, teacher, and child workshops geared to the needs and wants of each family. They should be based on a survey taken at the beginning of the year. "Hands on" activities are tangible, educational, and fun to do. This is an important step in helping parents, help their children. It is also the recommendations of this author to increase the mathematics workshops in an effort to raise all percentages scores in math for next year.

A third recommendation and one that should not be overlooked is the building of self esteem on the part of the parents and children. Letting parents now how important they are to the success of their children not only improves relationships with parents and the school, but it also helps

build stronger family relationships. The quality time parents and children spend together cannot be replaced by any other activity. And although building self esteem was not one of the objectives, it was a wonderful side effect that was experienced by all who participated in the program.

Dissemination

This practicum has been shared with and mode available to the school faculty, cafeteria staff, office staff, custodial staff, and administrators as well.

The author will also submit copies to special teachers, counselors, the school psychologist, PTA officers and Parent Outreach Personnel, and encourage them to join the author in reaching out to all the parents in every area of the curriculum.

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APPENDIX A

PARENTS'/TEACHERS' SIGN IN SHEETS

APPENDIX A

PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT ROSTER

DCPS

ACTIVITY: PARENT/CHILD WORKSHOP

SCHOOL: ELEMENTARY

FACILITATOR: Theresa Weitock

DA

PR

PARENT'S NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE #	CHILD'S NAME & GRADE		

inistrator's Signature

Facilitator's Signature

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APPENDIX B

PARENT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES, MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

APPENDIX B

82

type or print.

Chapter 1 PARENT OUTREACH PROGRAM
ACTIVITIES

SCHOOL

'TERESA WEITOCK
Contact Person
633-0429
Telephone #

J Day

DATE	ACTIVITY	PRESENTER	PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE	ATTENDANCE		
				Parents	Teachers	Others
9/21/92	CHAPTER I AND P.O.P. ORIENTATION MEETING.	B. DEL VALLE AND KLP STAFF	TO INFORM PARENTS ABOUT CHAPTER I AND PARENT OUTREACH PROGRAM	47	7	7
10/1/92	PTA/POP General Meeting	POP and KLP Staff	TO ELECT PTA OFFICIALS AND TO ASK PARENTS TO INPUT IDEAS FOR PTA.	67	9	4
10/8/92	OPEN HOUSE	Ms. June Day, Principal	TO INFORM PARENTS OF SCHOOL'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND TO MEET TEACHERS	101+	53	02
10/14/92	PTA Meeting	PTA/POP Staff	TO PLAN PTA ACTIVITIES, PLAN XMAS STORE AND DEPOSIT IDEA BANK FLYER	2		3
10/19/92	Science Project Workshop	KLP Staff and POP Staff	TO TEACH PARENTS AND STUDENTS HOW FOLLOW THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD	13	13	5
10/23/92	PTA Meeting	POP Staff	TO GET PARENTS INVOLVED IN PTA PLANNING	2		3
10/29/92	POP and Parent Meeting	POP Staff	PARENTS VOLUNTEERED TO HELP POP STAFF FOR WORKSHOP PREPARATION	7	1	3
10/29/92	Parent/Child Pumpkin Carving Workshop	KLP Staff and POP Staff	TO ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN SCHOOL'S ACTIVITIES.	59	22	4
11/12/92	POP/PTA GENERAL MEETING	PTA/POP B. DEL VALLE	PTA BUSINESS, PARENT CONCENRS AND FLORIDA COLLEGE PRE-PAID PLAN	09	01	01
11/27/92	PARENTING SKILLS WORKSHOP	B. WOODS R. GROSSMAN	PARENT COUNSELING GROUP HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF OUR KIDS	03	03	03
12/11/92	CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT AND GIFT MAKING WORKSHOP	D. TERREROS KLP STAFF	AN ACTIVITY THAT PROMOTES A FAMILY LIKE ATMOSPHERES BET. SCHOOL & FAM.	54	12	05
1/30/93	POP/PTA PLANNING MEETING	POP STAFF PTA STAFF	RECRUITING PARENTS TO HELP POP PLANNING WORKSHOPS?MEETINGS	4	1	02
1/31/93	BLACK HISTORY MEETING	MS. WILSON	PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR BLACK HIST.	1	1	0
2/13/93	VALENTINE"S DAY CANDY GRAM	POP/PTA STAFF	RECRUITED AND SHOWED PARENTS HOW TO WRAP VALENTINE"S DAY CANDY BAGS	3	0	4
2/14/93	VOLUNTEER APPRECIACION	POP STAFF	MADE CANDY BAGS FOR VOLUNTEERS DURING VOLUNTTER APPRECIATON WEEK	0	0	3
			TOTAL	272 parents	123 teachers	49 thers

+ parents signed in with teachers, many more came than signed in.

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APPENDIX C

HOME VISITS, PHONE CONTACTS, AND PLANNING SESSIONS

APPENDIX C

Chapter 1
Parent Outreach Program

MONTHLY SUMMARY REPORT

Elem. School

1991 -92 Year

MONTH	HOME VISITS	PHONE CONTACTS	WORKSHOPS / ATTENDANCE		MEETINGS / ATTENDANCE		OTHER ACTIVITIES/ATTENDANCE	
SEPTEMBER	7	50			1	61		
OCTOBER	8	121	2	111	2	281	workshop planning, preparation and set-up	25
NOVEMBER	21	93	1	13	1	9	judging T-giving baskets distributing	2 4
DECEMBER	11	98	1	61			planning workshop set-up workshop	1 2
JANUARY	109	100	0	0	2	12	1/30-POP/PTA 1/31-Black History	
FEBRUARY	100	100	2	75	2	10	Valentine's candy Bags Black Hist	25 50
MARCH								
APRIL								
MAY								
JUNE								
TOTAL								

Teresa Weitock — November 1, 1991
Signature of Parent Outreach School Contact — *Date*

11 - 01 - 91
Principal's Signature — *Date*

APPENDIX D

PARENTS' INTEREST SURVEY

APPENDIX D

PARENT INTEREST SURVEY

Parent's name_____ Child's name_____
Address_____ Teacher's name_____
_____ Phone number_____

The Parent Outreach Program would like for you to answer this survey in order to determine the specific needs of the parents of "our" students.

Please indicate below the type of workshops you would like to participate in to help you help your child learn.

[ ] helping with homework
[ ] improving reading skills
[ ] testing programs and what they means
[ ] improving your child's self-image
[ ] building you own parenting skills

As a parent, do you have trouble with?

[ ] your child's homework
[ ] discipline
[ ] spending enough time with your child
[ ] talking with your child
[ ] working with your school and teachers
[ ] dealing with your child's problem
[ ] motivating your child to do well in school
[ ] keeping discipline in the home

The Parent Outreach Program has offered several parenting skills and homework workshops and the attendance was minimum. Did you attend one or more of the workshops.

[ ] yes
[ ] no Were they beneficial to you?
[ ] yes
[ ] no

If yes, would you like the Parent Outreach Program to have more of these type workshops.

[ ] yes
[ ] no

If no, please indicate the reason you were no able to attend. _____
_____
_____

Do you need transportation to come to a school meetings?

[ ] yes
[ ] no

If yes, and if transportation were furnished, along with care for any younger child you had to bring, would you come?

[ ] yes
[ ] no

Would you be interested in special sessions with other parents to discuss problems of mutual concern.

[ ] yes
[ ] no

Where would you like these parenting program to be held?

[ ] in the school
[ ] in the home of a parent in your neighborhood or area.

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HOST SUCH A SESSION?

[ ] yes
[ ] no

When would you like to have these meetings scheduled?

[ ] on a weekday evening
[ ] in the early morning before school
[ ] sometime during a weekday morning or afternoon
[ ] on a Saturday-morning, afternoon or evening.

Would you like to have materials to help you help your child at home?

[ ] yes
[ ] no

If yes, what type of materials would you like to have?

[ ] worksheets to help with specific subjects such as math, spelling, language arts, etc.
[ ] tips on how to help your child

As a Kelsey Shaw parent, what do you like most about your child's school.

_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX E

SAT PERCENTILE SCORES FROM PREVIOUS YEARS

APPENDIX E

STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TEST

SPRING TESTING

Grade	Reading Comprehension		Math Comprehension	
	'90	'91	'90	'91
4th	23	15	50	41
5th	23	18	47	48
6th	17	14	57	41
Kdg.	12	10	12	14

APPENDIX F

CLASSROOM HELPER SIGN IN SHEET

CLASSROOM HELPER SIGN IN SHEET

Parents for the week of:

Sept. 21, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Sept. 28, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Oct. 5, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Oct. 12, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Oct. 19, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Oct. 26, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Nov. 2, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Nov. 9, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Nov. 16, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Nov. 23, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Nov. 30, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Dec. 7, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Dec. 14, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Dec. 21, 1992- 1. _____

2. _____

Jan. 4, 1993- 1. _____

2. _____

Jan. 11, 1993- 1. _____

2. _____

Jan. 18, 1993- 1. _____

2. _____

Jan. 25, 1993- 1. _____

2. _____

Feb. 1, 1993- 1. _____

2. _____

Feb. 8, 1993- 1. _____

Feb. 8, 1993- 2. _____

Feb. 15, 1993- 1. _____

2. _____

Feb. 22, 1993- 1. _____

2. _____

Mar. 1, 1993- 1. _____

2. _____

APPENDIX G

GUEST SPEAKER COMPARISON CHART

APPENDIX G

Comparison of Guest Speakers for the Past Two Years

Year	Teacher #	Guest Speakers #	Specific Occasion
'92	30	5	Career Day
'93	30	*10	Career Day

*Originally there were 14 guest speakers invited. However, only 10 were able to attend.

APPENDIX H

WORKSHOP AGENDA

APPENDIX H

*WORKSHOP AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTION

Principal or Assistant Principal

Leader/Facilitator

II. WELCOME PARENTS/THANK PARENTS FOR COMING

Explain Purpose/Give Brief Rationale

III. DEMONSTRATION/ROLE PLAY HANDS ON ACTIVITY

Presentations In Spanish, English, and Haitian-Creole

IV. DIVIDE PARENTS/STUDENTS/TEACHERS INTO GRADE LEVELS

Parents and Children Work in Small Groups

Teachers Facilatate Groups

Questions and Answers

V. WRAP UP AND CLOSING REMARKS

Facilitor and Principal

APPENDIX I

WORKSHOP EVALUATION GUIDE

APPENDIX I

A. Please rate the following questions in this manner:

Excellent = 1
Above Average = 2
Average = 3
Below Average = 4
Poor = 5

1. What over all rating would you give this workshop? ___

2. How valuable was it to you and your family? ___

3. How would you rate the communication between yourself and the persons conducting this workshop? ___

B. Please rate the following questions with a yes or a no.

4. Would you do some of the activities suggested? ___

5. Would you do this particular activity again with your child? ____

6. Would you attend another workshop? ____

7. Did you and your child enjoy this workshop? ____

8. What did you value the most in this workshop? ___

_____
_____

9. What did you value the least in this workshop? ___

_____
_____

10. Would you attend other workshops given in the future? ___

_____

_____

11. What other types of workshops would you enjoy seeing?
List your suggestions? ___

_____

_____

APPENDIX J

WORKSHOP TEACHERS I

APPENDIX J

IN SERVICE ONE

GETTING PARENTS ON YOUR SIDE

AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTION

Opening Remarks--Principal

Stating a Purpose of In Service

Explanation of Goals and Objectives

II. PRESENTATION

Film--Video

Implementation (Getting Started)

Solution Strategies

Plan of Action

Positive Communication

Conferences

Questions and Answers

WORKSHOP TEACHERS I

III. PARTICIPATION

Support

Soliciting Support

Participant Commitment

IV. CLOSING REMARKS

Facilitator

Principal

APPENDIX K

WORKSHOP TEACHERS II

WORKSHOP TEACHERS II

IN SERVICE TWO

HOW TO MAKE POP WORK FOR YOU

AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTION

Opening Remarks--Principal

Review Purpose of In Service

Explanation of Goals and Objectives

II. PRESENTATION

Film--Video

Implementation (Getting Started)

Solution Strategies

Plan of Action

Positive Communication

Phone Contacts/Conference

Demonstration

APPENDIX K

III. PARTICIPATION

Role Playing/Parents and Teachers Conference

Participant Commitment

IV. CLOSING REMARKS

Facilitator

Principal

APPENDIX L

WORKSHOP TEACHERS III

APPENDIX L

IN SERVICE THREE

WORKING WITH PARENTS

AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTION

Opening Remarks--Principal

Review Purpose of In Service

Explanation of Goals and Objectives

II. PRESENTATION

Review Solution Strategies

Review Implementation

Review Plan of Action

Discussion

Questions and Answers

Phone Contacts/Conference

Demonstration/Role Playing Teacher/Parent

WORKSHOP TEACHERS III

III. PARTICIPATION

All Participate and Make Commitment

Support Groups

Teachers, Counselors, Administrators, Parents

Resource Book

IV. CLOSING REMARKS

Facilitator

Principal

APPENDIX M

WORKSHOP PARENTS (HANDS ON)

PARENT/TEACHER/CHILD WORKSHOPS

AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTION

Opening Remarks--Principal

Facilitator

Stating a Purpose

Goals and Objectives

II. PRESENTATION

Demonstration

Hands on Activity

III. PARTICIPATION

Parent and Child

Grade Level Groups

Parents as Teachers

Teachers as Facilitators

V. CLOSING REMARKS

Facilitator and Principal